

October 24, 2016

**To the Administrator Addressed:**

**Subject:** 2015–2016 Final FIRST Ratings

*Final* 2015–2016 Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) ratings based on fiscal year 2015 are now publicly available. You can find ratings for both school districts and open-enrollment charter schools on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website:

- [school district ratings](#)
- [charter school ratings](#)

A previous “To the Administrator Addressed” letter dated August 8, 2016, instructed your school district or charter school (local education agency [LEA]) to view its *preliminary* FIRST rating. The letter also provided information about the data the TEA analyzes to produce the rating and described the appeals process available to your LEA. This appeals process is now complete, and all FIRST ratings are final.

**Required Reporting**

Within two months of the release of its final FIRST rating, your LEA must announce and hold a public meeting to distribute a financial management report that explains the LEA’s rating and its performance under each indicator for the current and previous year’s ratings. The report also must provide the financial information described in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§109.1001\(o\)\(3\)](#). We encourage your LEA to include in the report additional information that will be beneficial to stakeholders, especially information explaining any special circumstances that may have affected the LEA’s performance under one or more of the indicators.

The first of two required newspaper notices to inform stakeholders of the meeting must be published no more than 30 days and no fewer than 14 days before the public meeting. Your LEA may combine the meeting with a scheduled regular meeting of its governing board.

For full requirements related to the report and meeting, see 19 TAC [§109.1001\(o\)](#). For a template that your LEA can use in developing its financial management report, see the TEA [FIRST](#) web page or [FIRST Rating for Charter Schools](#) web page.

**Accreditation Status**

Please note that the TEA considers an LEA's FIRST rating when assigning an accreditation status, as required by the accreditation status rules in 19 TAC [§97.1055](#).

**Contact for Further Information**

If you have questions about your LEA's FIRST rating, please contact Yolanda Walker by telephone at (512) 463-0947 or by email at [Yolanda.Walker@tea.texas.gov](mailto:Yolanda.Walker@tea.texas.gov).

Sincerely,

David Marx  
Director  
Division of Financial Compliance

